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OUR OLDEST COLONY.

So little interest is taken by many of us in our colonies, that probably the only two facts popularly known about the island of Newfoundland is that it has fisheries and produces a famous breed of noble dogs! And yet Newfoundland is our oldest colony, and our colony nearest to the mother-country.

Newfoundland was discovered in 1497 by John and Sebastian Cabot (or Cabotto), Italians settled and trading in Bristol—foreigners prepared to do yeoman service for their adopted land. The Cabots went out in their ship *Matthew* at their own charges, and on St John's Day (24th of June) first sighted the shore, to which they gave the name of Prima Tierra Vista—'first-seen land.' Henry VII. gave the bold mariners his 'letters patent,' which authorised them to set up the Royal Standard, and secured the stingy king a share in their profits, without involving him in any share of their expenditure.

Seven years after the first Cabot expedition, French fishermen, intermingled with a few British adventurers, began to open up the Newfoundland cod fisheries. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth, Sir Walter Raleigh's half-brother, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, formally took possession of the island in the name of Great Britain. But on his return journey, his vessel, the *Squirrel*, foundered in a great storm with all hands—its companion ship, the *Golden Hind*, reaching home to tell how the brave sea-king

sat upon the deck;

The book was in his hand.

'Do not fear: Heaven is as near,'

He cried, 'by water as by land.'

In 1610 a British 'Company,' among whose promoters appears the name of the great Lord Bacon, was formed to settle a colony in Newfoundland. This proved unsuccessful; and the next movement in the same direction was a Government-commissioned Survey by one Captain Whitbourne, who had traded with the

place for forty years, and had the most enthusiastic faith in its possibilities. We need not quote his rhapsodies, which paint Newfoundland as a (rather chilly) Garden of Eden. Suffice it to say that recent scientific investigation actually confirms much of the old mariner's assertions! In 1871 it was declared that the valley of the Exploits, the largest river in the island, is capable of maintaining a thriving population of over seventy thousand. Its present inhabitants are numbered by a few hundreds, and the population of the whole island is smaller than that of the city of Edinburgh.

After Captain Whitbourne's report, Lord Baltimore made a fruitless attempt to settle the island. Then followed Lord Falkland. The emigrants he took out were chiefly Irish, and many more of that nation have since joined them. Yet in the year 1655 there were not more than two thousand Europeans living in the island, scattered in fifteen small settlements on the eastern coast. But every summer many thousands of fishermen plied their temporary labours on the shores.

Selfishness and greed prevented the speedy permanent settlement of the island, and have always stood in the way of its development from a basis of sound prosperity. Merchants and ship-owners from the west of England wished to use it solely for their own benefit. The Star Chamber was brought to issue all sorts of oppressive edicts to hinder substantial and agricultural colonisation. For instance, masters of vessels were bound, under heavy penalty, to bring back all persons who sailed out with them. No settlement was permitted within six miles of the shore. The veriest shanty within that limit was not to be permitted to have a chimney or any arrangement for lighting a fire. (Let the Newfoundland climate be borne in mind, and it will be seen that this restriction meant absolute prohibition.) Anybody accused of petty theft or other misdemeanour committed in Newfoundland was to be brought back to this country to be tried and

sentenced by the Mayors of such towns as Weymouth or Southampton.

The same greedy monopolists, who (about 1700) actually endeavoured to induce the British Government to forbid the landing of any woman in Newfoundland, and to adopt means to remove any already there, also took every opportunity to calumniate the resources of the island, thereby giving the lie alike to the ancient mariner Whitbourne, and to the modern men of science, yet creating a popular 'prejudice,' which exists to this very day.

The next difficulty was the petty feud between the French and English fishermen, whose unneighbourly feelings were increased by the war between France and England. The treaty of Utrecht, however (1713), assured the island to the British, and defined the rights of the French in a fashion which, while it secured a certain amount of peace, certainly did not smooth away all difficulties, nor invariably tend to island prosperity.

Meanwhile, things had gone badly indeed with the aborigines of Newfoundland. Cabot's advice to his captains concerning them and other 'natives of strange countries' was 'that they should be enticed aboard and made drunk with your beer and wine, for then you shall know the secrets of their hearts.' It is said, however, that he brought two to England, and, that, after a two years' experience of civilisation, they were seen 'in the Palace of Westminster,' and 'not to be distinguished from Englishmen until I was told who they were.'

One of Sir Humphrey Gilbert's party, and also good Captain Whitbourne himself, have only kindly words for the aborigines, describing them as 'harmless,' 'ingenious, and tractable,' 'full of quick and lively apprehension,' and willing to work for a small hire. But, alas! they did not at once understand the 'rights of property,' and indeed it might have been hard to explain why they might not take a few nails or a knife from those who had taken possession of their land and their rivers with all their mineral and finny riches. But 'circumstances seem to alter cases.' For every petty theft—or suspicion thereof—they were ruthlessly flogged and shot down by the invaders. The Home Government made futile appeals to its settlers to 'conciliate' the natives. But the Indians' experience of the white strangers was of a nature to cause the tribes presently to withdraw to remote lake settlements. Of these, in the year 1828, the traveller Cormack found but the deserted and decayed remains.

In the beginning of this century, a tardy and ill-conceived method of drawing the tribes from their retreat into friendly relations with civilisation was attempted. 'A reward was offered for the capture of a Red Indian; and in 1804 a female was taken by a fisherman and brought to St John's (the capital), where she was kindly treated and sent back to her tribe loaded with presents. A strong suspicion was entertained that the presents aroused the cupidity of the man entrusted to take her back to her people, and that the wretch murdered her and took possession of the property.'

In 1819 another female was taken by a

party of trappers on Red Indian Lake. Her husband and an Indian friend, who resisted her capture, were at once shot. She, too, was brought to St John's, named 'Mary March' after the month of her capture, 'treated with great kindness,' and sent back 'loaded with gifts.' But she had pined so terribly that she died in the hands of her captors on her way back to her (desolated) home. Her body was placed in a coffin and left where it was thought her people would find it. Years after, the traveller Cormack discovered it by the side of her murdered husband in the Indian burying-ground near the deserted settlement on Red Indian Lake.

Yet again, in 1823 three Indian women were seized in their wigwam by a party from Twillingate. They were a mother and two daughters. The mother and one daughter soon pined and died. The other endured her solitude among aliens for some years, and became 'useful as a housemaid.' She is described as six feet high, of a fine presence and handsome features, and of a nature gentle, courteous, and affectionate. A pencil and a piece of paper being given to her, she drew a deer perfectly with a few strokes, but began her sketch from the tip of the tail! She was the last of the aboriginal Indians ever seen alive. Even of their skulls, but one is known to have been preserved. It had a narrow escape from being thrown into a dust-bin, but is now stored in the Museum at St John's.

Not a snake, lizard, toad, frog, or any noxious reptile lives in Newfoundland, but game of all kinds abounds—ducks and geese, ptarmigan, sable martens, lynxes; foxes, red, black, and gray; otters, beavers, and reindeer. Even wolves and black bears still linger in the interior.

We said that Newfoundland is perhaps best known by its famous breed of dogs. But it appears that these, like the island's present humanity, are not indigenous. They seem to have been produced by some happy crossing of breeds. It is said that in the island they appear to degenerate, and that the Newfoundland dog thrives better out of Newfoundland. Old settlers are reported as saying that the genuine breed consisted of a dog twenty-six inches high, with black naked body, gray muzzle, gray or white stockinged legs, with dew-claws behind. The Leonberg dogs—a cross between the Newfoundland, the St Bernard, and the Pyrenean wolf-dog—are said to thrive well in the island, and to possess 'some of the highest moral qualities of the noble races whose blood blends in their veins.'

In the vegetable kingdom, Newfoundland, though a land of frost and fog, is reported by competent experts to be singularly rich. Common English flowers, with care, thrive well in sheltered gardens. Even the dahlia will survive the winter. Perennials do better than annuals. Among wild-flowers, lilies are developed in great luxuriance, also heart's-ease, Solomon's seal, columbine, bell-flowers, and pitcher-plants. Grasses are rich and abundant. Potatoes are unsurpassed anywhere; and cucumbers, marrows, melons, cabbages, cauliflowers, beans, carrots, and peas are abundant. Straw-

berries, raspberries, and gooseberries are fair. A farmer from Cape Breton settled near Deer Lake reports great satisfaction with his land. Clover and buckwheat grew luxuriantly, and the soil favoured the growth of flax.

It must always be borne in mind that there is great difference between the eastern and western shores of Newfoundland. On the western shore fog is rarely seen, and the climate is an 'ameliorated' one. The southern shore suffers most from fog. There is least fog in winter. Newfoundland is said to escape alike the fierce heats and the intense colds of Canada and some of the States. The inhabitants make no Arctic preparations for winter clothing, and open fireplaces suffice to warm the houses.

The interior of the island is clothed with magnificent forests of pine, spruce, birch, juniper, larch, &c. The aspen, the poplar, and the willow thrive. There are no cedars, beeches, elms, or oaks; and authority does not say whether any attempt has been made to introduce them.

It appears that in the language of the aborigines the island was called Baccalaos, or 'cod-fish'; and it is doubtful whether the most has even yet been made of these fisheries which have hitherto been almost its only source of wealth. For they have been managed in haphazard, old-fashioned, unscientific methods; and the fishermen are cramped and disheartened by finding themselves—owing to the 'truck' system—almost wholly in the hands of remote capitalists.

Newfoundland has a seal-fishery of comparatively recent date, not much older than the present century; but its seals are not those which furnish the daintiest wraps. Four species are found around Labrador and Newfoundland—the bay seal, the harp, the hood, and the square flipper. The skins of these are used rather for boots, harness, &c., though those of the harp seal with their lyre-like marking make fine mats for study or parlour.

There are large copper mines in the vicinity of Notre Dame Bay; but apart from these, the minerals of the country, said to include coal, lead, and iron, have scarcely yet been heeded.

The capital, St John's, stands on the northern side of the harbour of that name. It has been three times burned down. Each time, effort has been made to rebuild it on a safer plan, but its articles of commerce are, alas! of essentially inflammable material. Before the last fire, when property of the estimated value of four millions was consumed in a single night, it was fondly believed that St John's was fire-proof! The city clothes the slope of a hill which is crowned by the Barracks and the 'best houses,' commanding splendid views of the harbour and its hilly shores. The streets of St John's, save, perhaps, the chief, are little better than muddy lanes with wooden pavements of varied elevation, and at night they are but imperfectly lit.

By 'one who knows,' the scenery of Newfoundland (which residents in the island pronounce New-fund-land) is said to be 'Scottish' in character, with the variation (on the coast) that icebergs are seen drifting past, looking very pretty (like iridescent glass) in the June

sunshine! But even yet the island remains but little known even to its own inhabitants. A new arrival in St John's, zealously making inquiries with a view to the surroundings of an appointment he had received near Notre Dame Bay, wrote home: 'Nobody here seems to know much about the other parts of the island.' It is sincerely to be hoped that the severe crisis through which England's oldest colony is now passing may speedily give place to a period of increased prosperity, developed resources, and closer relations with the mother country.

THE CHRONICLES OF COUNT ANTONIO.*

CHAPTER VI. (continued).

THUS it was full morning when Antonio came again to the little cave by the river, and bethought him what he should do for his own safety. And suddenly, looking across the river, he beheld a gentleman whom he knew, one Lepardo, a Commissary of the Duke's, and with him thirty of the Duke's Guard; and they were riding very fast; for, having started at midnight to avoid the heat of the sun (it being high summer), so soon as they reached the outskirts of Baratesta, they had heard that Antonio was in the vault, and were now pressing on to cross the bridge and come upon him. And Antonio knew that Lepardo was a man of courage and hardihood, and would be prevented by nothing from entering the vault. But on a sudden Lepardo checked his horse, uttering a loud cry; for to his great amazement he had seen Antonio as Antonio looked forth from the cave, and he could not tell how he came to be there; and Antonio at once withdrew himself into the shadow of the cave. Now the banks of the stream on the side on which Lepardo rode were high and precipitous, and, although it was summer, yet the stream was too deep for him to wade, and flowed quickly; yet at Lepardo's bidding, six of his stoutest men prepared to leap down the bank and go in search of Antonio; and Antonio, discerning that they would do this, and blaming himself for his rashness in looking out so incautiously, was greatly at a loss what to do; for now he was hemmed in on either side; and he saw nothing but to sell his life dearly and do some deed that should ornament his death. So he retreated again along the passage and passed through the opening into the vault; and he summoned the hermit to aid him, and between them they set not one only, but a dozen of the coffins of the Peschetti against the opening, laying them lengthwise and piling one on the top of the other, hoping that Lepardo's men would not discover the opening, or would at least be delayed some time before they could thrust away the coffins and come through. Then Antonio took his place by the gate of the vault again, sword in hand, saying grimly to the hermit, 'If you seek Death, sir, he will be hereabouts before long.'

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But the Count Antonio was not a man whom his friends would abandon to death unaided; and while the Syndic was watching Antonio, the four young men who were with the Count made their escape from Cesare's house; and, having separated from one another, rode by four different ways towards the hills, using much wariness. Yet three of them were caught by the Duke's company that watched in the plain, and, having been soundly flogged, were set to work as servants in the camp. But the fourth came safe to the hills, and found there Tommasino and Bena; and Tommasino, hearing of Antonio's state, started with Bena and eighteen more to rescue him or die with him. And they fell in with a scouting party of the Duke's, and slew every man of them to the number of five, losing two of their own number; but thus they escaped, there being none left to carry news to the camp; and they rode furiously, and, by the time they came near Baratesta, they were not more than a mile behind Lepardo's company. But Lepardo, when he had detached the six men to watch Antonio, rode on hastily to find the Syndic, and learn from him the meaning of what he had seen; and thus Tommasino, coming opposite to the mouth of the hermit's cave, saw no more than six horses tethered on the river bank, having the Duke's escutcheon wrought on their saddle-cloths. Then he leaped down, and running to the edge of the bank, saw a man disappearing into the mouth of the cave, dripping wet; and this man was the last of the six who had swum the river, and were now groping their way with great caution along the narrow track that the hermit had made. Now Tommasino understood no more than Lepardo that there was any opening from the cave to the vault, but he thought that the Duke's men did not swim the river for their pleasure, and he bade Bena take five and watch what should happen, while he rode on with the rest.

'If they come out again immediately,' he said, 'you will have them at a disadvantage; but if they do not come out, go in after them; for I know not what they are doing unless they are seeking my cousin or laying some trap for him.'

Then Tommasino rode after Lepardo; and Bena, having given the Duke's men but the briefest space in which to come out again from the cave, prepared to go after them. And the Duke's men were now much alarmed; for the last man told them of the armed men on the bank opposite, and that they did not wear the Duke's badge; so the six retreated up the passage very silently, but they could not find any opening, for it grew darker at every step, and they became much out of heart. Then Bena's men crossed the river and entered the mouth of the cave after them. Thus there was fair likelihood of good fighting both in the passage and by the gate of the vault.

But the Count Antonio, not knowing that any of his band were near, had ceased to hope for his life, and he sat calm and ready, sword in hand, while the hermit withdrew to a corner of the vault, and crouched there muttering his mad answers and questions, and ever and again

hailing some one of the dead Peschetti by name as though he saw him. Then suddenly a coffin fell with a loud crash from the top of the heap on to the floor; for the Duke's men had found the opening and were pushing at it with hand and shoulder. Antonio sprang to his feet and left the gate and went and stood ready by the pile of coffins. But again on a sudden came a tumult from beyond the opening; for Bena and his five also were now in the passage, and the foremost of them—who indeed was Bena himself—had come upon the hindmost of the Duke's men, and the six, finding an enemy behind them, pushed yet more fiercely and strenuously against the coffins. And no man in the passage saw any man, it being utterly dark; and they could not use their swords for lack of space, but drew their daggers and thrust fiercely when they felt a man's body near. So in the dark they pushed and wrestled and struggled and stabbed, and the sound of their tumult filled all the vault and spread beyond, being heard outside; and many outside crossed themselves for fear, saying, 'Hell is broke loose! God save us!' But at that moment came Lepardo and his company; and he, having leaped from his horse and heard from the Syndic that Antonio was in very truth in the vault, drew his sword and came at the head of his men to the door; and hearing the tumult from within, he cried in scorn, 'These are no ghosts!' and himself with his boldest rushed at the door, and they laid hold on the handles of it and wrenched it open. But Antonio, perceiving that the door was wrenched open, and not yet understanding that any of his friends were near, suddenly flung himself prone on the floor by the wall of the vault, behind two of the coffins which the efforts of the Duke's men had dislodged; and there he lay hidden; so that Lepardo, when he rushed in, saw no man, for the corner where the hermit crouched was dark; but the voice of the madman came, saying, 'Welcome! Do you bring me another of the Peschetti? He is welcome!' Then the Duke's men, having pushed aside all the coffins save one, came tumbling and scrambling over into the vault, where they found Lepardo and his followers; and hot on their heels came Bena and his five, so that the vault was full of men. And now from outside also came the clatter of hoofs and hoarse cries and the clash of steel; for Tommasino had come, and had fallen with great fury on those of Lepardo's men who were outside and on the Syndic's levies that watched from afar off. And fierce was the battle outside; yet it was fiercer inside, where men fought in a half-light, scarcely knowing with whom they fought, and tripping hither and thither over the coffins of the Peschetti that were strewn about the floor.

Then the Count Antonio arose from where he lay and he cried aloud, 'To me, to me! To me, Antonio of Monte Velluto!' and he rushed to the entrance of the vault. Bena, hailing the Count's voice, and cutting down one who barred the way, ran to Antonio in great joy to find him alive and whole. And Antonio came at Lepardo, who stood his onset bravely, although greatly bewildered to find a party of Antonio's men where he had looked for Antonio alone.

And he cried to his men to rally round him, and, keeping his face and his blade towards the Count, began to fall back towards the mouth of the vault, in order to rejoin his men outside; for there also he perceived that there was an enemy. Thus Lepardo fell back, and Antonio pressed on. But, unnoticed by any, the mad hermit now sprang forth from the corner where he had been; and, as Antonio was about to thrust at Lepardo, the hermit caught him by the arm, and with the strength of frenzy drew him back, and thrust himself forward, running even on the point of Lepardo's sword that was ready for Count Antonio; and the sword of Lepardo passed through the breast of the hermit of the vault, and protruded behind his back between the shoulders; and he fell prone on the floor of the vault, crying exultantly, 'Death! Thanks be to God, death!' And then and there he died of the thrust that Lepardo gave him. But Antonio with Bena and three more—for two of Bena's five were slain—drove Lepardo and his men back before them, and thus won their way to the gate of the vault, where, to their joy, they found that Tommasino more than held his own; for he had scattered Lepardo's men, and the Syndic's were in full flight, save eight or ten of the old soldiers, who had served in Free Companies; and these stood in a group, their swords in their right hands and daggers in the left, determined to die dearly; and the grizzly-haired fellow who had killed Antonio's horse had assumed command of them.

'Here are some fellows worth fighting, my lord,' said Bena joyfully to Tommasino. 'Let us meet them, my lord, man for man, an equal number of us.' For although Bena had killed one man and maimed another in the vault, he saw no reason for staying his hand.

'Ay, Bena,' laughed Tommasino. 'These fellows deserve to die at the hands of men like us.'

But while they prepared to attack, Antonio cried suddenly, 'Let them be! There are enough men dead over this matter of Cesare's treasure.' And he compelled Tommasino and Bena to come with him, although they were very reluctant; and they seized horses that had belonged to Lepardo's men; and, one of Tommasino's men also being dead, Bena took his horse. Then Antonio said to the men of the Free Companies, 'What is your quarrel with me? I do but take what is mine. Go in peace. This Syndic is no master of yours.' But the men shook their heads and stood their ground. Then Antonio turned and rode to the entrance of the vault where his band was now besieging Lepardo, and he cried to Lepardo, 'Confer with me, sir. You can come forth safely.' And Lepardo came out from the vault, having lost no fewer than five men there, and having others wounded; and he was himself wounded in his right arm and could not hold his sword. Then the Count said to him, 'Sir, it is no shame for a man to yield when fortune is against him. And I trust that I am one to whom a gentleman may yield without shame. See, the Syndic's men are fled, and yours are scattered, and these men, who stand bravely together, are not enough to resist me.'

And Lepardo answered sadly—for he was

very sorry that he had failed to take Antonio—'Indeed, my lord, we are worsted. For we are not ten men against one, as I think they should be who seek to overcome my lord Antonio.'

To this Antonio bowed most courteously, saying, 'Nay, it is rather fortune, sir.'

And Lepardo said, 'Yet we can die, in case you put unseemly conditions on us, my lord.'

'There is no condition save that you fight no more against me to-day,' said Antonio.

'So let it be, my lord,' said Lepardo; and to this the men of the Free Companies also agreed, and they mingled with Antonio's band, and two of them joined themselves to Antonio that day, and were with him henceforward, one being afterwards slain on Mount Agnino, and the other preserving his life through all the perils that beset the Count's company.

Then Antonio went back to the house of Cesare, and brought forth the body of Cesare, and, having come to the vault, he caused those who had been slain to be carried out, and set the coffins again in decent order, and laid Cesare, the last of the house, there. But when the corpse of the hermit was brought out, all marvelled very greatly, and had much compassion for him when they heard from the lips of Count Antonio his pitiful story; and Antonio bestowed out of the moneys that he had from Cesare a large sum that masses might be said for the soul of the hermit. 'For of a surety,' said the Count, 'it was Heaven's will that through his misfortune and the strange madness that came upon him, my life should be saved.'

These things done, Antonio gathered his band, and, having taken farewell of Lepardo, and commended him for the valour of his struggle, prepared to ride back to the hills. And his face was grave, for he was considering earnestly how he should escape the hundred men who lay watching for him in the plain. But while he considered, Tommasino came to him and said, 'All Baratesta is ours, cousin. Cannot we get a change of coat, and thus ride with less notice from the Duke's camp?' And Antonio laughed also, and they sent and caught twenty men of Baratesta, grave merchants and petty traders, and among them Bena laid hold of the Syndic, and brought him in his chair to Antonio; and the Count said to the Syndic, 'It is ill meddling with the affairs of better men, Master Syndic. Off with that gown of yours!'

And they stripped the Syndic of his gown, and Antonio put on the gown. Thus the Syndic had need very speedily of the new gown which he had contracted to purchase of the lame tailor as the price of the tailor's information. And all Antonio's men clothed themselves like merchants and traders, Antonio in the Syndic's gown taking his place at their head; and thus soberly attired, they rode out soberly from Baratesta, neither Lepardo nor any of his men being able to restrain themselves from laughter to see them go—and most strange of all was Bena, who wore an old man's gown of red cloth trimmed with fur.

It was now noon, and the band rode slowly, for the sun was very hot, and several times they paused to take shelter under clumps of

trees, so that the afternoon waned before they came in sight of the Duke's encampment. Soon then they were seen in their turn; and a young officer of the Guard with three men came pricking towards them to learn their business; and Antonio hunched the Syndic's gown about his neck and pulled his cap down over his eyes, and thus received the officer. And the officer was deluded, and did not know him, but said, 'Is there news, Syndic?'

'Yes, there is news,' said Antonio. 'The hermit of the vault of the Peschetti is dead at Baratesta.'

'I know naught of him,' said the officer.

By this time Antonio's men had all crowded round the officer and his companions, hemming them in on every side; and those that watched from the Duke's camp saw the merchants and traders flocking round the officer, and said to themselves, 'They are offering wares to him.' But Antonio said, 'How, sir? You have never heard of the hermit of the vault?'

'I have not, Syndic,' said the officer.

'He was a man, sir,' said Antonio, 'who dwelt with the dead in a vault, and was so enamoured of death, that he greeted it as a man greets a dear friend who has tarried over-long in coming.'

'In truth, a strange mood!' cried the officer.

'I think this hermit was mad.'

'I think so also,' said Antonio.

'I cannot doubt of it,' cried the officer.

'Then, sir, you are not of his mind?' asked Antonio, smiling. 'You would not sleep this night with the dead, nor hold out your hands to death as to a dear friend?'

'By St Prisian, no,' said the young officer with a laugh. 'For this world is well enough, Syndic, and I have sundry trifling sins that I would be quit of, before I face another.'

'If that be so, sir,' said Antonio, 'return to him who sent you, and say that the Syndic of Baratesta rides here with a company of friends and that his business is lawful and open to no suspicion.' And even as Antonio spoke, every man drew his dagger, and there were three daggers at the heart of the officer and three at the heart of each of the men with him. 'For by saying this,' continued the Count, fixing his eyes on the officer, 'and by no other means can you escape immediate death.'

Then the officer looked to right and left, being very much bewildered; but Tommasino touched him on the arm and said, 'You have fallen, sir, into the hands of the Count Antonio. Take an oath to do as he bids you, and save your life.' And Antonio took off the Syndic's cap and showed his face; and Bena rolled up the sleeve of his old man's gown and showed the muscles of his arm.

'The Count Antonio!' cried the officer and his men in great dismay.

'Yes; and we are four to one,' said Tommasino. 'You have no choice, sir, between the oath and immediate death. And it seems to me that you are indeed not of the mind of the hermit of the vault.'

But the officer cried, 'My honour will not suffer this oath, my lord.' And hearing this, Bena advanced his dagger.

But Antonio smiled again and said, 'Then I

will not force it on you, sir. But this much I must force on you—to swear to abide here for half-an-hour, and during that time to send no word, and make no sign to your camp.'

To this the officer, having no choice between it and death, agreed; and Antonio, leaving him, rode forward softly; and, riding softly, he passed within half-a-mile of the Duke's encampment. But at this moment the officer, seeing Antonio far away, broke his oath, and shouted loudly, 'It is Antonio of Monte Veluto;' and set spurs to his horse. Then Antonio's brow grew dark and he said, 'Ride on swiftly, all of you, to the hills, and leave me here.'

'My lord!' said Tommasino, beseeching him.

'Ride on!' said Antonio sternly. 'Ride at a gallop. You will draw them off from me.'

And they dared not disobey him, but all rode on. And now there was a stir in the Duke's camp, men running for their arms and their horses. But Antonio's band put themselves to a gallop, making straight for the hills; and the commander of the Duke's Guard did not know what to make of the matter; for he had heard the officer cry 'Antonio,' but did not understand what he meant; therefore there was a short delay before the pursuit after the band was afoot; and the band thus gained an advantage; and Antonio turned away, saying, 'It is enough. They will come safe to the hills.'

But he himself drew his sword and set spurs to his horse, and he rode towards where the young officer was. And at first the officer came boldly to meet him; then he wavered, and his cheek went pale; and he said to the men who rode with him, 'We are four to one.'

But one of them answered, 'Four to two, sir.'

'What do you mean?' cried the officer. 'I see none coming towards us but Count Antonio himself.'

'Is not God also against oath-breakers?' said the fellow; and he looked at his comrades. And they nodded their heads to him; for they were afraid to fight by the side of a man who had broken his oath. Moreover, the figure of the Count was very terrible; and the three turned aside and left the young officer alone.

Now by this time the whole of the Duke's encampment was astir; but they followed not after Antonio, but after Tommasino and the rest of the band; for they did not know Antonio in the Syndic's gown. Thus the young officer was left alone to meet Antonio; and when he saw this his heart failed him and his courage sank, and he dared not await Antonio, but he turned and set spurs to his horse, and fled away from Antonio across the plain. And Antonio pursued after him, and was now very near upon him; so that the officer saw that he would soon be overtaken, and the reins fell from his hand and he sat on his horse like a man smitten with a palsy, shaking and trembling: and his horse, being unguided, stumbled as it went, and the officer fell off from it; and he lay very still on the ground. Then Count Antonio came up where the officer was, and sat on his horse, holding his drawn sword in his hand; and in an instant the officer began

to raise himself; and, when he stood up, he saw Antonio with his sword drawn. And Antonio said, 'Shall men without honour live?'

Then the officer gazed into the eyes of the Count Antonio; and the sweat burst forth on his forehead. A sudden strange choking cry came from him; he dropped his sword from his hand, and with both hands he suddenly clasped his heart, uttering now a great cry of pain and having his face wrung with agony. Thus he stood for an instant, clutching his heart with both his hands, his mouth twisted fearfully, and then he dropped on to the ground and lay still. And the Count Antonio sheathed his sword, and bared his head, saying, 'It is not my sword, but God's.'

And he turned and put his horse to a gallop and rode away, not seeking to pass the Duke's encampment, but directing his way towards the village of Rilano; and there he found shelter in the house of a friend for some hours, and when night fell, made his way safely back to the hills, and found that the Duke's men had abandoned the pursuit of his band and that all of them were alive and safe.

But when they came to take up the young officer who had been false to his oath, he was dead—whether from fright at the aspect of Count Antonio and the imminent doom with which he was threatened, or by some immediate judgment of Heaven, I know not. For very various are the dealings of God with man. For one crime He will slay and tarry not, and so, perchance, was it meted out to that officer; but with another man His way is different, and He suffers him to live long days, mindful of his sin, in self-hatred and self-scorn, and will not send him the relief of death, how muchsoever the wretch may pray for it. Thus it was that God dealt with the hermit of the vault of the Peschetti, who did not find death till he had sought it for twenty-and-three years. I doubt not that in all there is purpose; even as was shown in the manner wherein the hermit, being himself bound and tied to a miserable life, was an instrument in saving the life of Count Antonio.

THE HUMOURS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

WHEN a new member makes his first appearance in the House of Commons, he has to be escorted to the table to take the oath by two other members of Parliament. This is one of the immemorial usages of the House of Commons. It originated in a far remote past, when it was really necessary, in order to prevent personation, that two members of the House should identify the claimant of a seat after a by-election as the person named in the writ of the returning officer. The precaution has been unnecessary for many a year. But such is the reluctance of the House of Commons to part with any of its quaint and antique ceremonies, that it is still retained; and though a representative may come to the Bar of the House as

the unanimous choice of a constituency of ten thousand electors and produce his credentials, he will not be permitted to take his seat unless he can get two members to act as his sponsors.

Dr Kenealy, the famous counsel for 'The Claimant,' presented himself at the Bar unattended, after his election for Stoke-upon-Trent in February 1875. The Speaker informed him of the usage of the House; and as he could not get two members to accompany him to the table, he was obliged to leave. It was only by a special resolution of the House, moved by Mr Disraeli, its Leader at the time, that Dr Kenealy was allowed to take his seat without complying with the usual practice.

When men assemble together in social life, as in a theatre or at a meeting, the ordinary custom is to uncover while they are seated, and to don their hats as they enter or leave the place. In Parliamentary life that rule is reversed. Members can wear their hats only when they are seated on the benches. As they walk to their seats or rise to leave the Chamber, they must be uncovered.

This custom is the source of much confusion and embarrassment to new members. The House never fails to show its resentment of a breach of its etiquette, however slight. It will, without distinction of party, unanimously roar with indignation at a new member who, ignorant or unmindful of the Parliamentary custom, wears his hat as he walks down the floor of the Chamber. An amusing incident occurred in the early days of the first session of the present Parliament. An offending member, startled by the shout which greeted him as he was leaving the Chamber with his hat on his head instead of in his hand, paused in the middle of the floor and looked around with a mingled expression of fright and perplexity. 'Hat, hat!' shouted the House. This only embarrassed him the more. He felt his trousers pockets and his coat tails for the offending article of attire. He even looked at his feet to see if he were wearing it at that extremity of his person. It is impossible to conjecture what might have happened further, had not Dr Tanner walked up to the offending member, and, amid the loud laughter of the House, politely took off his hat and then handed it to him with a courtly bow.

The hat plays many important parts in Parliamentary customs. It also contributes occasionally to the gaiety of life in the House of Commons. No incident is greeted with more hearty laughter than the spectacle of a member, after a magnificent peroration, plumping down on his silk hat on the bench behind him. The bashful and awkward member generally figures in those accidents; but the misfortune has befallen even old and cool Parliamentary hands like Mr Chamberlain and Sir William Harcourt,

and has completely spoiled the effect of a few of their most eloquent speeches.

A few years ago Mr R. G. Webster, member for East St Pancras, sat down, after his maiden speech, on a new silk hat which he had provided in honour of the auspicious occasion; and as he was ruefully surveying his battered headgear, to the amusement of the unfeeling spectators, Mr Edward Harrington, an Irish representative, rose and gravely said: 'Mr Speaker, permit me to congratulate the honourable member on the happy circumstance that when he sat on his hat his head was not in it.' The strident call of 'Order, order!' from the Speaker was drowned in roars of laughter.

In probably every other legislative Chamber in the world each member has a special seat allotted to him. But though there are 670 members in the House of Commons, the Chamber, strangely enough, was built to accommodate only about half that number; and the only members who are certain of seats are Ministers and ex-Ministers, the occupants respectively of the Treasury bench and the first Opposition bench. The consequence is that on occasions of great interest there is always a scramble for places. A large crowd of members gathered at Westminster in the early morning of the evening on which Mr Gladstone introduced the Home Rule Bill of 1892; and when, after hours of waiting, the door giving immediate entrance to the Chamber was opened at seven A.M., so mad was the rush for seats that several members were crushed, knocked down, and trampled upon.

On such occasions, a member secures a seat for the evening by leaving his hat on it. But it must be his own workaday headgear. If he brings with him a second hat and leaves the precincts of the House wearing that hat, he forfeits all right to the seat. These two ancient but unwritten regulations have recently been the subjects of definite and specific rulings by the Speaker. After the split in the Irish party, and when the personal relations between the rival sections were very strained, one Irish member took possession of a seat on which another Irish member had placed his hat in the usual way. On the member aggrieved bringing the matter publicly under the notice of the House, the Speaker declared that he had an unquestionable right and title to the seat. Again, in connection with the fight for places on the occasion of the introduction of the Home Rule Bill in 1892, the House was informed that Dr Tanner brought with him a dozen soft hats to Westminster that morning, and with them secured twelve seats for colleagues who did not go down to the House till the ordinary hour of meeting in the afternoon; and again the Speaker ruled that the only hat which can secure a seat is the real *bond fide* headgear of the member and not any 'colourable substitute' for it. During the recent influenza epidemic the Speaker, in mercy for the hatless wanderers in lobbies, departed from the old usage so far as to recognise a card left on the bench as sufficing in place of the hat.

Members are not allowed to refer to each other by name in debate. The only member

who is properly addressed by name is the Chairman who presides over the deliberations of the House in Committee. On a member rising to speak in Committee he begins with, 'Mr Mellor,' and not with 'Mr Chairman,' as at public meetings. When the Speaker is in the Chair, the formula is, 'Mr Speaker, Sir.' In debate a member is distinguished by the office he holds, as 'The Right Honourable Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer;' or, 'The Honourable Gentleman the Member for York.' Some make use of the terms, 'My Honourable Friend;' or, 'My Right Honourable Friend;' but the rule is in every case to use the word 'Honourable.'

This custom has sometimes led to odd results. During the last Parliament, two members were ignominiously expelled from the House after their conviction for gross immoral offences; and yet in the discussion that took place on each occasion the criminal was still punctiliously described as 'The Honourable Gentleman.' Again, lawyers are styled 'Honourable and Learned;' and officers of the army and the navy, 'Honourable and Gallant.' The late Mr W. H. Smith, who was not a lawyer, was once referred to in a speech as 'The Right Honourable and Learned Gentleman.' 'No, no,' exclaimed the simple old man, disclaiming the distinction amid the merriment of the House. 'I beg the Honourable gentleman's pardon; I am not Learned.'

It is a breach of order for a member to read a newspaper in the House. He may quote an extract from one in the course of a speech; but if he attempted to peruse it as he sat in his place, his ears would soon be assailed by a stern and reproving cry of 'Order, order!' from the Chair. Some members resort to the deception practised by the young lady who had *Vanity Fair* bound like a New Testament and was observed reading it during service in St Paul's Cathedral. The 'Orders of the Day' is a Parliamentary paper containing the programme of business, which is circulated amongst the members every morning. Into this programme members often slip a newspaper or periodical, and read it while the Speaker imagines they are industriously studying the clause of a Bill or its amendments.

The House of Lords is less strict, oddly enough, in little matters of this kind than the House of Commons. The Peers allow the attendants to pass up and down their Chamber delivering messages; and they have a reporter—the representative of the Parliamentary Debates—sitting with the clerks at the table. But in the House of Commons no one but a member is allowed to pass up and down the floor. An attendant, even when he has letters and telegrams to deliver, dare not pass beyond the imaginary line known as the Bar, just inside the main entrance to the Chamber. He gives the messages to some member sitting near the Bar, and they are passed on from hand to hand till they reach their owners.

Another curious and amusing custom is the performance known as 'Counting the House.' No business can be transacted unless a quorum of forty members is present. But, all the same, business proceeds even though only one or two

members are present; and the Speaker never notices the paucity of the attendance unless a member rises in his place and says, 'Mr Speaker, I beg to call your attention to the fact that there are not forty members present.' That being said, the Speaker must proceed to count the House. He does not, however, simply count the members who are present in the Chamber at the moment. He sets going the electric bells which ring in every room of the vast building a summons to members to return to the House. The members come rushing in from all quarters, and after the lapse of three minutes, the doors are locked. Then, and not till then, the Speaker, using his cocked hat (which, by the way, he never wears over his huge court wig) as a pointer, proceeds to count the number in the House. When he arrives at the fortieth member he cries out 'Forty' in a loud voice, resumes his seat, and business again proceeds from the point at which it was interrupted. But if there were not forty present, he would simply quit the Chair without a word, and the sitting would be over.

It is a favourite resort for a member who desires to secure an audience for a colleague to move 'a count.' The object, however, is not always attained, for members rush out again when the Speaker announces 'forty,' and leave the benches as deserted as before.

A few sessions ago, a London Radical member, who was to have resumed a debate after the Speaker returned from dinner, at 8.30 o'clock, found when the time arrived no one in the House but himself, the Speaker, and the clerks at the table. Not relishing the idea of having to talk to empty benches, he gravely called the attention of the Speaker to the obvious fact that there were not forty members present. The division bells rang out their summons as usual; but only thirty-six members responded to the call, with the result that the member, instead of obtaining an audience, had the sitting suspended and lost his chance of making a speech. A member is occasionally 'counted out' in that fashion by an opponent, who, after a survey of the precincts of the House, discovers there are not forty members in attendance; but this is the only instance on record of a member having 'counted out' the House to his own confusion.

The forms of the House throw difficulties in the way of a member who desires to relinquish his legislative functions. He cannot resign his seat theoretically. He must be either a bankrupt or a lunatic; be expelled, or accept an office of honour or profit under the Crown—such as the nominal stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds—before he can quit the House of Commons. On the other hand, the forms of the House afford him few opportunities of exercising his legislative functions by initiating a little legislation on his own account. Every session at least three hundred Bills are introduced by 'private members,' as the unofficial members of the House are called. Not three per cent. of these Bills pass through all the stages necessary before they can be inserted on the Statute Book. The vast majority of them are killed by the curious system known as 'blocking.' The Government appropriates so

much of the time of the House to its own business, that Bills of private members can only come on for consideration at twelve o'clock at night, or at half-past five on Wednesday sittings. Now, as no opposed business can be taken after these hours, unless a Bill meets with universal favour it can make no progress. The opposition of a single member is sufficient to prevent any progress being made with a Bill. And if that opposition is exercised, the Bill is said to be 'blocked.'

Twelve o'clock at night arrives. Government business which occupied the attention of the House till that hour is then postponed; and the clerk goes through the remaining 'Orders of the Day,' in which as many as eighty of these Bills of private members often appear. The clerk reads out the first of the Bills—'The Chimney-sweepers Registration Bill.' The member who has introduced it says 'Now,' meaning that he desires the Bill to be proceeded with there and then. Immediately another member cries out, 'I object,' and—bang! goes the Bill into the waste-paper basket. The Bill has been 'blocked!' And so on through the entire list of Bills. The witching hour of night brings a terrible slaughtering of 'the innocents of legislation' in the House of Commons.

'Blocking' has degenerated into a system of reprisals. The Bills of Liberal members are blocked by Conservatives; and the Bills of Conservative members are blocked by Liberals. Frequently, the most pathetic appeals are made at this time of the sitting. 'Spare my little ewe lamb!' the author of the Bill cries out when he has heard the dreaded words 'I object' from the benches at the opposite side of the House; 'No, no!' comes the relentless response; 'my little duckling was killed by your colleagues. I must have my revenge.'

Of course, many of these Bills represent pernicious fads and hobbies of members, or quixotic attempts to make straight the crooked things of this world—Bills it would never do to pass into law. Some members get so passionately attached to a hobby that night after night, session after session, parliament after parliament, they will strive, in face of cruel disappointments, to get it inserted on the Statute Book. An old and eccentric member of the House, who died recently, vainly endeavoured during half a century of Parliamentary life to get passed into law a Bill for preventing persons from standing outside windows while cleaning them. During his last session, the poor old fellow complained to a colleague that his object in introducing the Bill had been quite misunderstood by the House for these fifty years. 'I introduced the Bill,' said he, 'not for the sake of the window-cleaners, but for the sake of the people below, on whom they might fall. The idea of the Bill was suggested to me by the fear that a window-cleaner might fall on myself.'

A member addressing the House stands uncovered; but not always. There is an occasion when it is positively out of order for a member to speak on his feet and with his hat off. He must speak in his seat with his hat on his head. When a debate has terminated, and the question which has been discussed is

put from the Chair, an interval of two minutes—during which the electric division bells ring out their summons all over the precincts of St Stephen's—is allowed to enable members to get to the Chamber. The time is taken by a sand-glass on the table, and when it has elapsed, the doors of the Chamber are locked. It is at this particular juncture that it is essential that a member who desires to address the Chair should retain his seat and wear his hat. If he were to follow the ordinary practice, and stand up uncovered, he would be roared and shouted at from all sides of the House for his breach of etiquette. Mr Gladstone had occasion a few years ago to address the Chair just as a division was about to be taken; and as he never brought his hat into the Chamber, he was obliged to put on the headgear of one of his lieutenants who sat on the bench beside him. Now, Mr Gladstone's head is of an abnormal size. He has to get his own hats made to order. It is improbable that the hat of any other member in the House would fit him; but the hat available on the occasion of which we write only just covered his crown, and members made the rafters ring with laughter at his comical efforts to balance it on his head for the few minutes he occupied in speaking from his seat on the front Opposition bench.

But there is nothing more amusing, perhaps, in all the quaint and curious 'customs' of the House of Commons, than the strange ceremony which marks the termination of its every sitting. The moment the House is adjourned, stentorian-voiced messengers and policemen cry out in the lobbies and corridors, 'Who goes home?' These mysterious words have sounded every night for centuries through the Palace of Westminster. The performance originated at a time when it was necessary for members to go home in parties for common protection against the footpads who infested the streets of London. But though that danger has long since passed away, the cry of 'Who goes home?' is still heard night after night, receiving no reply, and expecting none.

THE ANGEL OF THE FOUR CORNERS.*

IV.—FROM THE CLOISTER'S SHADE.

OUTSIDE, the trees were snapping in the frost, and now and again a dull boom told that the ice was cracking on the river. A night of deep wrenching frost, the snow three feet deep, the cold steely sky brooding above. Presently, as the two stood there, the bells of the parish church rang out. It was midnight—the morning of the New Year. There were voices, too, of men singing as they drove past the house, sleigh bells joining with the song and the church bells. They could not hear the words, but they knew the air, and they knew what the song was:

Three men went forth to woo a maid—
Heigh-ho, those lovers three!—
And the first one was a roving blade,
And the second came from the cloister shade,
And the third from the gallows-tree,
C'est ça! Ho! ho! C'est ça!

Try as Camille would, the second verse of the song kept beating in his ears. It did not leave him all that night, and it followed him for many a day, with a kind of savage irony.

Three men knelt down with a lover's plea—
Ho, ho, for such a maid!—
And she chose not him of the gallows-tree,
And the roving blade had an eye too free,
But sweet is the tongue from the cloister's shade!
C'est ça! Ho! ho! C'est ça!

The song died away, but the bells kept on ringing, and there came to them distantly laughing voices. There was a strange look in Camille's eyes and swimming in his face. He stood still, and did not offer to touch the girl, though he stood very near, and her hand rested so near his, she leaning against the bureau, as though to steady herself. But standing so, he spoke.

'Perhaps you will never understand,' he said, 'how it all was. No one can ever quite know. I was younger; they told me it was better for you—better for me, better for the Church, that we should part. I thought you would forget. I thought that perhaps I should never see you again. I used to pray for us both. I never heard from you or about you. But I could not forget. . . . This week it all came back to me—to shut myself out from you always—for ever—by the sacred office! I sat up in my bed choking—I could have shrieked. I could not rest till I had seen you again. I thought, perhaps she is married; perhaps she no longer cares; perhaps she—is dead. So I came here. Somehow, I seemed to break loose when I put off my student clothes, and you see me as I am to-night. You think I am wicked, that I am untrue to the Church and to you. Ah, Marie, you no longer care as you once did, and I—God help me!—I cannot go back now to the other. And I cannot live without you. I am punished—punished!' He dropped his head, and a sob caught him in the throat—he was so boyish, so honest. There was a silence.

'Camille!' The voice was low and sweet, and very near. It drew his head up like a call. Their eyes swam in one burning hungry look; then there was a little cry from her, and in an instant he was kissing away two tears that slowly gathered, and as slowly fell down her hot cheek. The woman had conquered at last—in spite of the 'great men of the kingdom!' For the man there was no going back now. He had cast the die for ever. But she did not know that, for she was a woman, and having conquered, having justified herself, she was ready for sacrifice. Now when the man had wiped out all his past to begin life with her, she was ready to immolate herself. She loved him so well that she thought only of his good.

'Camille,' she said, gently disengaging herself, 'I am paid for those three years! But now—now, it must go no farther. The others parted us before, and made you appear unmanly—'twas that which hurt me so. Now it is I that part us, dear. You must go back. You mustn't ruin your life. Think of it all—what would be against you. Go back. Be a priest; and I'—

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He was very pale and quiet. 'And you—what would you do?' he said.

'There is always the nunnery left,' she answered wearily yet bravely.

'You think that I ought to go?' he questioned.

'You wish me to go, Marie?'

'For your own good. Think of the trouble that would come unless. You will go, Camille?'

'Never—never! Remember how your brother blamed himself—and she was an actress, you said. To leave you now; how I would hate myself! . . . Never!' His voice was strong and decisive. There was no wavering. 'There are a hundred men—better men—to take my place—there, Marie; but is there any to take my place—here?' He ran his arm around her waist. 'There is no one!' he added.

'No one, Camille,' she said faintly.

The man had in a vague, yet direct way, too, realised that to save a bruised life at your feet is better than to go a-hunting for souls with the King's Men. He had wandered out to the Cross-Roads, and the Angel of the Four Corners had motioned him back to his own door. The woman had been willing to save the man, but her heart beat for joy that he did not go.

'Come what will, Marie,' he said fervently, clasping her hands and gathering her eyes to his, 'we must not part again.'

'You do not fear the Church?' she asked.

'I am a man!' he cried, drawing himself up proudly.

'Perhaps they will not'—She paused in a sweet confusion.

'Perhaps they will not—marry us?' he said, piecing out the sentence. His eyes flashed. 'How dare they not?' he added. 'I was not yet a priest.'

How strange that *was* sounded in her ears! Already they had begun a new life. And how proud she was of him—the rebel for her sake. She moved a hand over his shoulder. 'You must go to the curé,' she said—'to good Monsieur Fabre. He knows all. I confessed to him.'

He thought a moment. 'Yes, I will go,' he said—'I will go.'

'You must go at once—now,' she urged. Then she added hastily: 'We have been here too long—I forgot!'

With a laugh he picked up the overcoat which had dropped from her shoulders, and carefully wrapped it around her. He was big with energy, emotion, and courage. He was a rebel who doubted not of success.

A moment afterwards, they were about to issue into the other room.

'Wait,' she said discreetly. 'You can go out by another door leading from this room, and the curé lives just above on the top of the hill.'

She opened a creaking door. He shut it for an instant, clasped her to his breast, then opened the door again, drew his cap from his pocket, put it on, and was gone into the frosty night. She shut the door slowly, and went back to the dancing-room. It was nearly filled, and dancers were clamouring for the fiddler and Marie. As she entered the room, Alphonse strutted over to her.

'Been for a walk with the fiddler in my coat?' he said in a rough way.

'Here is your coat, and thank you, Alphonse,' she said quietly and reprovingly.

He flung it over his shoulder. 'Lucky that the fiddler wasn't wearing it, or I'd never seen it again. Perhaps he was running off with it, and you stopped him,' he added.

She turned on him with a still cold face, her eyes all fire. 'Behind his back, Alphonse—it's so easy.'

'I'll say it to his face. He's only a tramp, anyway.'

'You'll find him at the curé's,' she coldly added, turning away to Medallion.

Anxiety showed in Medallion's eyes. 'What has happened?' he said.

She hesitated.

'I wish you would tell me,' he added. 'It's better that a girl should not go through some things alone.'

Their eyes met. The love that he had once borne her mother gave now a kind of fatherliness to his look. Vaguely she felt it, and, with her fresh frank nature, responded at once. 'You remember the story I told after the Dance of the Little Wolf?' she asked.

He nodded. 'Yes, yes.'

'Well, that was all true. He—Camille—was studying for a priest; it could not be, and we parted. He has come back; that's all.'

'What has he come back for?' Medallion gravely asked.

A kind of triumph showed in her eyes. 'What do you think?' she said.

'Is he a priest now?'

'No.'

'He is giving it all up for you, Marie?'

'For me,' she said, with a flash of her brown eyes.

Medallion's hand closed on hers warmly, strongly. 'Faith, then, he's a man!' he said; and, in truth, you're worth it, and a hundred such men!'

'Oh, you don't know—you don't know how good and brave he is,' she rejoined.

Medallion smiled quizzically. 'Ah, I know men, and I know no man, my dear, that's as good as a good woman!—and you're of the best.—Where has he gone?'

Again a smile crossed her face. To a woman there come but few moments of triumph, only a few great scenes in her life. She could not resist the joy of saying with a little dash of vanity: 'He has gone to the curé.'

Medallion gave a noiseless whistle. Frankly and promptly he said: 'Well, a happy New Year to you both, my girl! It's just now five minutes inside the New Year.'

Meanwhile, Alphonse had hurried from the room and was hard on the trail of Camille. He could see the tall figure striding on in the moonlight. Even in the vague glimmer he could see a swinging pride in the bearing of the stalwart youth. When he left the house he had no definite purpose in his mind. Now he had a kind of devilry which gets into the blood of men when a woman stands between them. In the river-driver's veins there beat the shameless agony of Cain. He broke into a run. Before Camille had half climbed the

hill to the curé's house, he was panting hard after. A cry broke from him before he reached Camille, the snarl of a man in whom there are working envy and hate.

Camille heard, and turned. He recognised Alphonse.

'What you go to the curé's for?' asked Alphonse roughly.

Camille shrugged his shoulders. 'What's that to you, my man!' he said.

Alphonse ripped out an oath. 'What you put on airs with me for! "*My man!* *My man!*" Take that back, you tramp.'

Perhaps it was a long training in the cloister, perhaps it was a superior nature, but Camille responded calmly: 'Yes, I will take it back, if you like, but you must not call me a tramp.'

You cannot exorcise a devil in a moment. The game had gone too far. War was in Alphonse's heart. 'I want to know what for you go to the curé? For the banns?' he sneered.

But there was also in Camille's face the freedom of his new life. 'Perhaps,' he answered meaningly.

'Then you fight me first!' shouted Alphonse, and blocked the way.

An instant after he struck out. It was not altogether an unequal battle, for although Alphonse was powerful and hardened by a laborious life, Camille was well knit, supple, and had, unlike most of his comrades in college, been constant in athletic exercises. Alphonse discovered this. By a sudden trick, Camille, who was being pressed and punished hard, suddenly brought his assailant to the ground, just as a figure appeared on the hill above them—the curé, on his way to visit a sick parishioner.

The curé called out apprehensively. At that instant, with a helpless moan, Camille rolled off Alphonse, and blood gushed from his neck. Alphonse sprang up and disappeared in the woods. A moment later the curé knelt beside the youth, stanching the blood from the wound. Sleigh bells sounded near. He raised his head, and called loudly. Camille was unconscious. The curé lifted him up, and felt his heart to see if there was life.

A few moments afterwards, Camille lay in the curé's little room, conscious now, and able to tell, little by little, his story—why he had come to the parish, and why he was seeking the curé. But he did not tell then, and he never told, whose knife it was that left a scar upon his neck. People guessed, for Alphonse never came back to the parish, but guessing does not put a man in prison.

The curé was a wise man. There was but one way now, and he was sorry that that way had not been entered on three years before; for the lives of these two young people had been on the road to misery ever since. In any case, after this affair with Alphonse, the Church was impossible to Camille. The best words that Camille had heard in his life came now from the curé, who, after walking up and down the room thoughtfully for a time, said: 'My son, I will send for Marie.'

Marie, Medallion, and the curé saw the first

sunrise of the New Year from beside the saved and sleeping Camille.

The Church had one priest the less, but two human souls were travelling to that good tavern which men call Home.

LEMONS AT MASSA-LUBRENSE.

Who has not read descriptions of Sorrento, the fairest gem in Southern Italy, and its orange groves? In April and May the air is heavy with the scent of orange blossom; and the trees, which are still laden with the golden fruit of the last year's crop, are covered at the same time with the white flowers which promise a rich harvest. Underneath the trees are carpets of the fallen blossom, which, as it is trodden under foot, sends forth a scent oppressive in its fragrance. The sun does not strike on the roots of the trees, for they stand so close together as to form an impenetrable shade. Only the common spring violet can flourish in the gloom of an orange grove.

As the carriage winds its way up the road which leads from Sorrento to Massa-Lubrense, the orange gardens disappear, and give way to groves of lemons. As one sees the pale yellow fruit through its shining dark-green leaves, it appears as if the beauty of the lemon-tree surpasses that of the orange. The former is the most delicate of the two, and requires a dry and warm climate. The damp, soft air of Sorrento is perfect for the cultivation of the orange; but Massa-Lubrense, which is dry and more sheltered, is given up to the produce of lemons, which yield an enormous percentage to the fortunate possessors of land that can be used for that purpose. Orange-trees are here and there mingled with the lemons, just as lemon-trees will be seen in the midst of the orange groves of Sorrento, though in neither case are they the chief produce of the place.

Massa-Lubrense is largely indebted for its salubrious air to its lemon plantations. Three years must pass before a newly planted lemon-tree begins to bear fruit; and in order to bring it to perfection, it must be freely watered. A hollow is dug round the base of the tree to receive the water as in a basin, so that it may slowly penetrate to the roots. Poles are planted at intervals in the ground, somewhat higher than the trees, and smaller poles or canes are placed crossways above them, which are covered with matting when the winter approaches. It is not removed till the spring is well advanced, for lemon-trees must be most carefully sheltered from wind or frost. The fruit is gathered chiefly during the summer months, especially in May, July, and September, though there are lemons on the trees all the year round.

Much depends on the situation in which they are placed as regards the time of ripening. The fruit on the upper branches is the first to ripen, because it is more exposed to the sun. Men are employed to gather it; and young girls place the lemons carefully in the baskets waiting to receive them. Those that fall on the ground are not fit for exportation, but are sold in the Naples market. The stems which remain attached to the fruit are carefully cut

off with scissors. Those which have been emptied from the baskets on the ground in heaps must be counted in the presence of the proprietor, or some trustworthy person whom he has deputed to replace him. Women are employed for counting, and with the greatest dexterity they snatch up three lemons in their right hand, and two in their left, and in a sing-song tone chant out 'E uno, e due,' and so on, till they are all counted. The overseer who jots down the numbers knows that every number called represents five lemons.

Now the process of packing begins. Girls from ten to twenty years of age wrap each one carefully in tissue-paper, while older women place them in the boxes ready to receive them. Great care must be taken by the girls deputed to hand the lemons to the packers to choose those of equal size. The women by long practice can tell at a glance the size of the lemons required for the different cases. Each layer must fill the empty space without pressing the fruit too close together. The cases are of different sizes, containing from one hundred to five hundred lemons. The wood used for these boxes is sent to Massa-Lubrense from America, and also from Trieste. The wood, which must be pliable, so as to yield to the pressure of the lemons, is not to be obtained in Italy. A carpenter who is employed by the day assists at the process of packing, not only to make the cases as they are wanted, but also to nail the cover on each box as it is filled. A thin strip of the same wood is used as a band to bind round the finished cases.

The greater number of lemons, as well as the finest and choicest, are exported to America; and those of an inferior quality are sent to England. Steamers come expressly from America to Sorrento to export them. During the summer months, a steamer is always at anchor in the Bay of Sorrento waiting for its cargo. Large fishing-boats convey the ready packed cases from Massa-Lubrense to Sorrento. The girls who are employed in wrapping up the fruit carry the boxes down to the shore on their heads at a steady run. The impetus is often so great, owing to the heavy weight they carry, that they are obliged to shout to the passers-by to move out of their way, as they cannot easily swerve aside or draw up suddenly. Some of these girls go from the village, which is on a height, to the shore, three or four times in the course of a morning; but those less strong cannot manage it more than twice. Some of the boxes weigh as much as a hundred and fifty or two hundred English pounds, and such great weights strain the backs of those who carry them considerably. Nevertheless, they seldom lay down their burden to rest unless it be unusually heavy. Their wages are one franc a day; but the women who fill the boxes are paid two francs, as the work requires the greatest dexterity. The largest proprietor of lemon groves in the place employs these women and girls all the year round, and for that reason gives them even lower wages.

Most of the proprietors are unfortunately hard, grasping men, who take advantage of the necessity of those they employ. Some of the richest of these were originally peasants, and

they only care to hoard and accumulate money. A man with over three thousand a year will spend less than three hundred, and so his fortune rapidly increases. Few of them sell their products themselves to the American markets; but the lemons are bought up in large quantities by speculators who have direct dealings with America. Each day they receive telegrams giving them information as to the state of prices, which vary considerably, and a proprietor often feels that he has been taken in, when, after selling his lemons at an apparently good price, he finds that the buyer had secret information by which his profits had been trebled. The current price during the summer of 1894 was between forty and fifty francs a thousand, though the price in America is much higher. This price is lower than the average; but the great abundance of lemons last year has more than made up to the sellers for what they have lost on the price.

The smallest lemon-tree is calculated to yield twenty francs a year clear profit. Many of the proprietors make fifteen or sixteen per cent. on their produce. The population of Massa-Lubrense from the richest landowner to the poorest peasant may be said to live by the lemon plantations. Some parents who are unusually careful of their daughters, object to their working with a large number of companions who may draw them into evil ways; but the employers as a rule are particular as regards the conduct of the women and girls who work for them.

When evening approaches, they say the rosary together and sing hymns while they continue their work; and who can doubt their being unconsciously influenced by the beauty that surrounds them, as the gorgeous colours of sea and sky form a fitting framework to the fair landscape, with its olive yards and lemon groves interspersed by vineyards?

MY MYSTERIOUS CLIENT.

IN TWO PARTS.—PART I.

I STARTED to practise as a solicitor without a shred of influence or connection. I simply hired a couple of third-floor-back rooms in a gloomy city building, exhibited my name on an imposing brass plate at the entrance door, engaged a diminutive lad for a clerk, and waited for clients. Needless to say that I found it weary and uphill work for several years; and I used to employ my abundant leisure time in writing short stories for the magazines. I mention this fact merely because I remember very well that I happened to be thus occupied one momentous afternoon when my clerk entered the room and said that a gentleman wished to see me.

'What name?' I inquired, shuffling away my writing, and producing a bundle of legal documents which I kept handy for the purpose.

'Please, sir, he says you wouldn't know him,' replied the lad, lowering his voice.

'Has he come on business, do you think?' I whispered anxiously.

'I think he is all right, sir,' replied the boy, who took quite a filial interest in my affairs,

and was always immensely excited when a client appeared upon the scene.

'Show him in,' I said, bending over the papers with an air of absorption.

'Morning, sir,' said a hearty voice the next moment. 'Mr Carruthers, I presume?'

I looked up, and beheld a burly figure in a tweed suit blocking up the doorway, and completely eclipsing my small clerk, who hovered in the background. My visitor looked like a well-to-do farmer, with a round red weather-tanned face, reddish hair and whiskers, and a pair of very light steel-blue eyes. I judged him to be about forty years of age, and as he entered, he extended towards me in cordial greeting a hand of the dimensions of a leg of mutton.

'Hope I see you well, sir?' he exclaimed, as he nearly shook my hand off.

'Thank you, yes,' I replied with professional curtness.

'That's all right; that's capital,' he cried absently, while he cast a quick keen glance round the room. 'You are Mr Carruthers the lawyer, I suppose?'

'A solicitor,' I said gravely.

'Yes. Duly qualified and all the rest of it,' he observed, placing his hat carefully on the floor beside his chair.

'Of course,' I replied. 'And what is your name? My clerk said you would not give it.'

'You're welcome to it. It was no good sending it in to you, because you wouldn't have recognised it. I'm a stranger, I am, only landed two days ago from South Africa. James Dreaver, of Durban, is my name. I've been more than twenty years over there,' he explained, jerking his thumb vaguely over his shoulder.

'Farming?' I inquired.

'Mostly, but other things as well. I've come home for a bit of a spree, and to see some o' the old folk, if there's any left. Suffolk is my county,' he added.

After some inquiry as to his credentials, he alleged that my name had been mentioned to him while coming up in the train from Plymouth.

I was not yet by any means convinced that my new client was speaking the truth, yet I felt tolerably satisfied of his respectability from his manner and appearance, and my circumstances were not so prosperous as to induce me to stand on ceremony. I was curious, also, to learn what his business was, and I therefore magnanimously waived the point of etiquette and said: 'Well, what can I do for you?'

Mr Dreaver seemed relieved at my condescension, and he at once assumed a confidential tone, and began to give me some details of his family history. It appeared that he wished to purchase the freehold of the farm which a widowed sister occupied in Suffolk; to seek out a brother, and, if necessary, to establish him in business; in fact, he was full of benevolent schemes for the benefit of his relations. His communications were interesting to me because they revealed a prospect of lucrative business. The only drawback was that at the moment he apparently had no definite instructions to give me; everything depended upon

the result of the journeys and inquiries he was about to make.

'Then I shall hear from you after your return from the country,' I said, feeling a little disappointed. 'When do you start?'

'At once,' he replied. 'I expect to be back in about a fortnight.—Meanwhile,' he added, suddenly producing a rather bulky packet, done up in brown paper, from a capacious side-pocket, 'I'll leave this in your charge, Mr Carruthers, till I come back.'

'What is it?' I inquired, as he placed the packet on the desk.

'A few odds and ends that I don't care to carry about with me,' he replied carelessly.

'Some family papers, and a few loose stones.' 'Valuables?' I exclaimed, weighing the packet in my hand. 'It is very heavy.'

'I'm my own banker,' he said with a wink. 'There's odds and ends there of various kinds. More than I care to risk losing, anyway: you mustn't be afraid of my forgetting to claim 'em,' he added with a laugh.

'Isn't it rather confiding of you to offer to leave them with a stranger, Mr Dreaver? After all, I am a stranger to you; and for aught you know, I may be dishonest,' I said jokingly.

My new client looked at me gravely for a moment, as though my remark startled him.

'Of course the packet will be all right here,' I added, rather amused at his anxious expression.

'You are Mr Carruthers the solicitor, are you not?' he said thoughtfully.

'Certainly.'

'Well, your friend who sent me here said you was to be trusted. Besides, I can tell an honest man when I see one,' he said, slapping his knee emphatically.

I was conscious of blushing at this eulogistic remark, and with some embarrassment I changed the conversation. 'You had better leave me your address,' I said.

'I have none,' he answered, rising from his seat. 'I leave town to-night for Suffolk; but I shan't stay there. I don't know where I may go afterwards. Better leave it that I'll write.'

'Very well, you know where to find me, at all events,' I replied.

'That will be all right, Mr Carruthers,' he said as he grasped my hand. 'You stick to the packet till you hear of me again. Before I return to the Cape, there will be several matters of business I shall want you to transact for me.'

With this satisfactory assurance, my new client shook me warmly by the hand and departed. After he had left, I began to wish I had questioned him more closely. It seemed extraordinary that he should have left a parcel of valuables in my charge on so slight acquaintance. In those days, I was apt to get a little flustered and nervous at a first interview with a new client, and the suddenness of Mr Dreaver's visit had rather overwhelmed me. However, I consoled myself with the reflection that no harm had been done, and if he had behaved rashly, it was his own affair, and not mine. My solitary safe being a small one, I decided to deposit the parcel at my banker's; and this I accordingly did, little anticipating the embarrassment which the precaution subsequently caused me.

For some weeks afterwards I was in a mild flutter of excitement in anticipation of a further visit from my new client. But he neither called nor made any sign; and just about that time I had a small stroke of luck in the shape of a quasi-public appointment, which came as a veritable godsend. My new duties and the sudden accession of work, both direct and indirect, that they entailed, completely took the edge off the keenness of my curiosity about Mr Dreaver, and, in fact, I ceased to think about him. Thus it came about that though month succeeded month without bringing any news of him, I was barely conscious of the circumstance, until one day, during a period of slackness, I referred back to my previous diary, and was astonished to find that more than a year had elapsed since Mr Dreaver's unexpected call.

I was rather startled at the discovery, and was inclined to blame myself for my supineness. Considering that Mr Dreaver was a stranger from a far-off land, it seemed heartless of me to have allowed so long a time to elapse without troubling to make inquiries. He might have been robbed and murdered; or he might have died and been buried in a pauper's grave for lack of identification; or he might, by some mental aberration, have forgotten that he had deposited a parcel with me. I did not exactly know what I could do, however, for I had no clew to his whereabouts, and he had not told me the name of his Suffolk relatives. But I felt that I must take some step or other to relieve my mind, and after some deliberation, I drew up the following brief notice: 'Mr James Dreaver, of Durban, is requested to communicate, by letter or otherwise, with Mr Martin Carruthers, Solicitor, 92 Bucklersbury, E.C.' I caused this to be inserted in three of the principal London dailies, but still my mysterious client made no sign. I then resolved to communicate with the police; but it occurred to me that, first of all, I had better examine the contents of the parcel. I was beginning to suspect that I had been the victim of a senseless practical joke, concocted by some facetious friend, and that the 'loose stones' contained in the parcel might be specimens of the common or garden pebble. I therefore walked across to my bank one afternoon, and, producing the receipt, demanded the parcel which I had deposited more than a twelvemonth ago.

I could see by the expression of the clerk's face when he heard my request that something was wrong. He carried the receipt into the manager's room, and after a brief absence, he invited me to follow him there. The manager, a courteous old gentleman with a bald head and spectacles, looked manifestly ill at ease, and was twisting the receipt about nervously between his fingers. 'Mr Carruthers, I am extremely sorry to inform you,' he said, motioning me to a chair, 'that the packet referred to in this receipt cannot be found.'

'You mean that it has been stolen!' I exclaimed, starting.

'Hardly possible, especially as nothing else is missing,' said the manager. 'I should explain, Mr Carruthers, that we discovered your parcel had—ahem!—disappeared about a week ago

while checking our muniment schedule. But as everything else was there, we hoped—as I still believe—that the parcel will turn up, and therefore I delayed telling you till a complete and thorough search was made.'

'And have you searched?' I inquired.

'Every hole and corner of the strong-room has been overhauled. I am completely at a loss, and, of course, it is impossible to conceal the truth from you any longer: you hold our receipt; but'—said the manager, shrugging his shoulders as he threw the document on the table—'we cannot give you the parcel because, apparently, we haven't got it.'

Here was a dilemma, rendered all the worse as the bank disclaimed legal responsibility.

I need not detail our further conversation, because, practically, it amounted to nothing. The bank's apologies did not console me in the least, nor was it any satisfaction to reflect that personally I was blameless. The awkward fact remained that Mr Dreaver's parcel had disappeared, and though I was not legally responsible to him any more than the bank was responsible to me, still it would not be an agreeable task to face my client with the news. It seemed to me that it had been much easier and simpler for the bank manager to inform me of the loss, than it would be for me to make the disclosure to the person chiefly interested.

However, as a week or more had elapsed since my advertisement appeared in the newspapers, I was sanguine enough to hope that I should hear nothing further from Mr Dreaver; and under the altered circumstances of the case, it seemed quite providential that he should have so completely and mysteriously disappeared. Wherever he was, I ardently prayed that he might remain there, and be spared the cruel disappointment which awaited him if he ever called upon me again.

For some few weeks after this, a knock at the outer door of my office caused me unnecessary trepidation; but my client maintained his impenetrable seclusion and reserve, and the only alarm I suffered resulted in the very happiest conclusion.

One afternoon, on returning from my mid-day refection, I found a young lady waiting to see me in the clerks' office. I saw at a glance that she was refined, ladylike, and pretty, and being a very susceptible bachelor, I invited her into my private room without asking her name.

'An advertisement appeared in the *Times* a few weeks ago under your name,' began my fair visitor nervously, as I begged her to be seated. 'I have the cutting here.'

My heart misgave me as I recognised, in the slip of paper which the young lady laid upon the desk, my unfortunate notice addressed to Mr James Dreaver.

'Yes,' I replied, turning hot and cold by turns; 'Mr James Dreaver is a client of mine.'

'He was my father,' the girl exclaimed eagerly.

'Was! Is he dead, then?' I exclaimed with a start.

'Yes; he died more than a year ago at the Cape,' was the reply.

'I think there must be some mistake,' I said slowly, as I looked at her. 'May I inquire your age?'

'I am nearly twenty-two,' she answered with a blush.

'You say your father died at the Cape. The Mr Dreaver who is my client was in England about the time you mention.'

'Oh! it cannot be the same, then,' exclaimed the young lady, with an air of deep disappointment. 'Poor papa never returned to England. He died at Port Elizabeth.'

'My client came from Durban,' I said.

'I noticed that; but I thought it was a mistake. However, there is evidently another Mr Dreaver. I am sorry to have occupied your time,' said the young lady, rising with great confusion. 'The fact is that when poor papa died, his affairs were in great disorder. I thought that perhaps—'

'Pray, don't apologise,' I interrupted eagerly. 'I am not the least surprised at your curiosity having been aroused by the advertisement. But my client is clearly not your father.'

I was inclined to enlarge upon the subject, for it seemed to give me an excuse to gaze upon the fair face before me. It was quite impossible that the young lady could be any relation to my mysterious client. She clearly belonged to a higher social status, and, apart from the fact that my client was hardly old enough to have been the girl's father, there was not the faintest resemblance between her sweet, refined, delicate features, violet eyes, and pretty golden hair, and my client's coarse rubicund countenance. Though relieved, for obvious reasons, that the young lady had no claim to the contents of the parcel, I was disappointed, on the other hand, that our acquaintance should be of this transitory nature. However, vain regrets were useless, and almost before I had realised her presence, Miss Dreaver had disappeared from my office like a beautiful vision.

It is at this point that my commonplace story becomes tinged with an element of romance, which, as it only has a remote connection with the main subject, must be related briefly. In a word, then, it came about that my casual introduction to Miss Dreaver, in the manner above described, led to her becoming my wife. We met again, months afterwards, in a perfectly fortuitous manner, at the house of a mutual friend down at Molesey, where I had taken rooms for the summer. I heard Ada Dreaver's sad little history before her name was mentioned; how she had been brought up as the motherless daughter of a rich man; how her father, having, after his retirement, sustained heavy losses, had been obliged to break up his establishment and resume his former business at the Cape; how he had left his darling child in charge of friends in England, being uncertain of the duration of his stay abroad; and how he had died suddenly, overstrained by a series of misfortunes, a broken and ruined man. His daughter, thrown upon the world with nothing but her accomplishments, which were happily considerable, had been compelled to take a situation as governess in the family of a friend; and it was

at this point of the recital, when my hostess was warmly eulogising the young lady's courage and fortitude, that Miss Dreaver entered the room. We recognised one another at once; and not to weary the reader with the prosaic details of a happy courtship, our little romance ended within a very short time in bridesmaids, orange blossom, and an unpretentious wedding.

After my marriage, during which an interval of more than ten years elapsed without bringing any tidings of my mysterious client, I prospered in my profession, but without attaining to any degree of affluence. When a young man has a family of six children, and is practically dependent on his professional earnings, he must be content to remain poor and struggling, and should esteem himself fortunate, in these days of severe competition, if he can contrive to keep out of debt and live like his neighbours. This was my own case, for my private means were very small, and my dear wife, though she brought me the untold wealth of unclouded domestic happiness, was a dowryless bride. But though forced to live in a very modest style, and to do without many little comforts and luxuries to which we had both been accustomed in our earlier days, we were happy in one another and in our children, and looked forward to what the future might have in store for us without the slightest uneasiness.

TWO SPRINGS.

THE wood-birds tell me that the Spring is here,
And in the garden all the almond trees
Flutter pink ensigns to the wooing breeze,
Forgetful of the winter past and drear.

The violets blossom that we set last year—
I wonder do you mind the spot we chose,
We two together, by the guelder rose?
Ah me, those days, those sweet Spring days that
were!

And in our wood to-day I found a patch
Of yellow primrose blossoms quaintly fair;
There was such scent of sweetness in the air,
Their own faint perfume I could scarcely catch.

Above me, as I linger here, the sky
Smiles clearly blue through branches sunlight-kissed,
Just as it did last year before I missed
Your presence, and found Spring had passed me by.

But there is something now of Autumn's grief
In all this golden sunshine; and the Spring,
Amid the glories of her blossoming,
Forecasts the shadow of a falling leaf.

For ah! the blossoms of that last sweet Spring—
Our Spring, Beloved—whither are they flown?
The grass upon a grave I know is grown,
And there is nothing left worth cherishing.

LYDIA M. WOOD.

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